

SWEARING AGAINST MODERNISM: *SACRORUM ANTISTITUM* (SEPTEMBER 1, 1910)

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The historiography of Modernism has concentrated on the doctrinal issues raised by partisans of reform and their condemnation, to the relative neglect of social and political aspects. Where such connections have been made the linkage has often been extrinsic: those involved in social and political reform subscribed to theses articulated by historical critics and critical philosophers. The connections, however, run deeper, reaching into issues surrounding authority and autonomy, ecclesiastical control of not only Catholic intellectual life but also Catholic political and social activity. This article revisits the Oath against Modernism and brings these connections into sharper resolution.

“The atmosphere created by Modernism is far from being completely dissipated.”¹

IT MAY WELL HAVE BEEN THE CASE, given the defects of human nature and the effects of original sin, that ecclesiastics on more than one occasion violated the second commandment when they considered the effects of Roman Catholic Modernism. The reference to the *motu proprio Sacrorum antistitum* in my subtitle, however, indicates that a different kind of swearing is of interest here. As its centerpiece, the *motu proprio* promulgated an Oath against Modernism, prefaced by the republication, textually, of the final, disciplinary section of the antimodernist encyclical, *Pascendi dominici gregis*. Following the oath was an instruction originally addressed in 1894 to the bishops of Italy and to the superiors of religious congregations

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¹ “Chronique du mouvement religieux,” *Études* 125 (1910) 414–26, at 421. All translations from the French are my own.

regarding the rules and duties of Christian preaching, now applied to the universal Church.

At the time of its promulgation, some Catholics questioned the necessity of such measures, especially an oath. Did the peril presented by Modernism really continue to exist in the Church and, if so, at a level serious enough to warrant action that could stifle certain necessary freedoms? Did Modernists and Modernist propaganda still exist, or was the Vatican trying to exterminate a phantom?² To take the measure of these issues a retrospective look at the period 1907–1910 will be necessary.

Like *Pascendi*, the oath forms part of the dynamics of defining Modernism itself. A contested part of that definition, then and since, has been the relation of doctrinal Modernism to social and political movements prominent at the time. Judgments have differed, beginning with those who were directly involved with the movement. Albert Houtin's *Histoire du modernisme catholique* (1913) begins with a chapter on an intellectual *ralliement* that emerged in France during the last quarter of the 19th century and follows it with a second on the various papal initiatives that issued in a social and political *ralliement*, with the reactions it called forth. Yet the connections between the two appear largely extrinsic: the reformers of the temporal order more or less approved certain theories of the doctrinal reformers that came under papal censure.³ For Houtin, those working for the amelioration of social conditions reflect more *sentiment* than *science*—or, where the latter was acquired, not the sort that would pose critical questions to the tradition in the manner of a Louis Duchesne or an Alfred Loisy. In his *Le Modernisme dans l'Église* (1929), Jean Rivière accepts the parameters set out in *Pascendi*, and thus marginalizes social Modernism.⁴

Alec Vidler's *The Modernist Movement in the Roman Church* (1934) continued this line of Modernist historiography, retaining the emphasis on doctrine and viewing social Modernism as separable from it, thus excluding it from study.⁵ More recently, Marvin O'Connell's *Critics on Trial* (1994) presents a more complex picture. It tracks an intellectual crisis within Catholicism, linked to political events in France and swiftly resolved by measures set forth in the antimodernist encyclical. However, if *Pascendi* were effective to the degree O'Connell suggests, then why the anti-modernist oath in 1910 and its survival for half a century thereafter?

² See "A propos de la propagande moderniste," *Revue du clergé français* 64 (1910) 725–29, at 726. This was an extract from the *Bulletin de l'Institut Catholique de Paris*.

³ See Albert Houtin, *Histoire du modernisme catholique* (Paris: Chez l'auteur, 1913) 290–91.

⁴ Jean Rivière, *Le Modernisme dans l'Église* (Paris: Letouzey, 1929).

⁵ Alec Vidler, *The Modernist Movement in the Roman Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1934).

And why the sanctions subsequent to *Pascendi* leveled against some of those involved in movements for reform?

In *L'Audace et le soupçon* (1997) Pierre Colin adopts a broader perspective that is helpful in illuminating these issues. In its myriad forms—philosophical, political, economic, and social—liberalism met opposition throughout the 19th century, resulting in a sort of antimodernism *avant la lettre*. The assimilation of Modernism to liberalism enabled the adversaries of political liberalism to reduce the positions advocated by the Christian Democrats to the Modernism stigmatized by Pius X. Colin goes beyond this extrinsic connection to identify factors internal to both intellectual and political-social reformist currents that establish a closer relationship between the two. While Loisy and the Christian Democrats belong to different worlds in many respects, the efforts of the latter to reconcile Church and people are not disjunct from those of intellectuals to assimilate the contributions of the “human sciences”—philology, history of religions, psychology, sociology, etc.—and religion. At the basis of both scientific modernity and political modernity is the constitution of a public forum of discussion:

In accordance with evidently different modalities, both scientific modernity and political modernity are based on a new practice of discussion and formation of opinion in and through discussion. All that, which is founded on the freedom of personal judgment, represents a serious breach in the social systems based on authority.⁶

Put another way, one possible framing of the problem that lies at the basis of the Modernist crisis is “how to conceive the presence and exercise of a spiritual power in a pluralist society.”⁷ Colin’s approach permits an integration of the oath into a broader perspective not only on Modernism but also on the relationship between Catholicism and modernity.

PASCENDI AND ITS IMMEDIATE AFTERMATH

*“No heresy has ever been so radical.”*⁸

In 1907, as a result of the syllabus *Lamentabili sane exitu* and the encyclical *Pascendi dominici gregis*, Modernism was (to use a favorite expression of its adversaries) “unmasked.” Its philosophical roots lay exposed to view, the extent of its reach into various areas of Catholic intellectual life identified, and its destructive potential expressed in the clearest of terms. In representing Modernism as a system, the encyclical showed the full force

⁶ Pierre Colin, *L'audace et le soupçon* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1997) 79.

⁷ *Ibid.* 269.

⁸ “Chronique du mouvement religieux” 421.

of the danger. The syllabus had earlier specified 65 propositions “to be condemned and proscribed” that were extracted from the writings of principal Modernists.⁹ In its general lines and specific errors Modernism was vehemently repudiated. And, by many indications, to the desired effect.

Pascendi's final portion was given over to practical measures of containment and control, emphasizing rigorous application of procedures already in place and creating new ones. In the period following its issuance, the Index of Forbidden Books, hardly neglected in the years leading up to condemnation, steadily augmented its rolls. This effectively blocked publication of some manuscripts. Short of being “Indexed,” books could be prohibited for use in seminaries, as was the case for a number of titles produced by figures less closely associated with the Modernist movement. If books could come under close scrutiny, all the more so for teachers of impressionable young minds—any teachers regarded as questionable were cashiered. Some allegedly Modernist journals and newspapers also disappeared from the scene, through either direct censure or voluntary withdrawal, given the pontifical handwriting on the wall. Moreover, many proponents of reform had incurred suspension or excommunication, their influence having been effectively neutralized. The Vatican had not only condemned Modernism's doctrinal errors; it had specified practical means to ensure its extermination.¹⁰ Yet the Modernist threat continued to be countered in papal documents, theological writings, and polemical works.

Some idea of why this anti-Modernist campaign continued can be gleaned from two articles by J. M. Vidal on the religious intellectual movement in Italy, the first appearing in January 1909, the second in May 1910 in the *Revue du clergé français*. The former surveyed 1908, beginning with Modernists and their writings. It noted that two of the most prominent Modernists in Italy had incurred suspension, Romolo Murri in 1907 prior to the syllabus and encyclical, and Salvatore Minocchi in early 1908 for a lecture questioning the historicity of the Genesis narratives. As for periodicals, Minocchi's *Studi religiosi* had disappeared in the wake of Modernism's condemnation, as had Murri's *Rivista di cultura*. Because of the pontifical measures, the journal *Rinnovamento* had lost some of its

⁹ The text of the encyclical can be found in Vincent A. Yzermans, ed., *All Things in Christ: Encyclicals and Selected Documents of Saint Pius X* (Westminster, Md.: Newman, 1954) 89–132, and that of the syllabus at 223–28. In his *Simplex réflexions sur le décret “Lamentabili sane exitu” et sur l'encyclique “Pascendi dominici gregis”* (Ceffonds: Chez l'auteur, 1908), Alfred Loisy attempted to identify the sources of the condemned propositions, acknowledging that the majority were taken from his own writings.

¹⁰ The effects of *Pascendi* on various regions of the Church are surveyed in *U.S. Catholic Historian* 25 (2007), a special issue on “Centennial Essays on Responses to the Encyclical on Modernism.”

collaborators; and late in 1907 the cardinal archbishop of Milan excommunicated its editors, directors, authors, and collaborators, further eroding its support. On the other hand a number of periodicals, most of them short-lived, appeared: *Nova et vetera* lasted only from January to October 1908; likewise, *Quercia*, a review of sociology, art, and literature, which also appeared in January 1908, did not last out the year. *Savonarola*, successor to *Giustizia sociale*, also was prohibited and disappeared. While from a positive standpoint the ephemeral existence of these publications could be taken as evidence for the weakening of support for reformist literature, in a less positive view they tokened continuing resistance by innovators. Vidal concluded his survey of the religious scene in Italy with the observation that such "boldness in resisting the Church's authority is seen only in Italy. Elsewhere, the condemnation of Modernism has caused the disappearance of several periodicals: new ones have not been created to raise up the standards of revolt." He speculated whether this resistance was a sign of less respect for ecclesiastical authority in Italy than in other parts of the Church, or whether Modernism had simply made greater inroads there.¹¹ He does not directly answer the question but does note that most of the Italian Modernist reviews were launched by young men, often students. They lack the expertise in theology, philosophy, and exegesis that characterized a previous generation of Modernists, Vidal observes. Though he does not explicitly say so, he is pointing to a mutation in the character of Modernism that other commentators will explicitly note.

The theme of continuing resistance dominates Vidal's second article. Modernists, "defeated in open battle, have adopted guerilla tactics. . . . Apparently, they want to persist in their revolt."¹² Some Modernists, Vidal remarks, continue to resist openly, like Murri, despite his having incurred excommunication since the January article. While Murri initially repudiated the label "Modernist," currently he is less dismissive of it. In any case, his *Rivista di cultura*, which appeared again at the outset of 1909, has convicted him of it. Murri is representative of "social-democratic Modernism, politico-ecclesiastical reformism, and revolutionary anticlericalism."¹³ Although *Rinnovamento* no longer exists, *Coenobium* continues, as does *Cultura contemporanea*, successor to *Nova et vetera*. *Battaglia d'oggi* is of the same stamp. Minor reviews as well as allies and protectors of Modernists also appear in these pages.¹⁴ In short, Vidal

¹¹ J. M. Vidal, "Le mouvement intellectuel religieux en Italie durant l'année 1908," *Revue du clergé français* 57 (1909) 49–70, at 55.

¹² J. M. Vidal, "Le mouvement intellectuel religieux en Italie," *Revue du clergé français* 62 (1910) 454–89, at 454.

¹³ *Ibid.* 457.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* 470–75.

concludes that Modernism has not been vanquished. The persistence of pseudonymous publications points to the presence of priests among their ranks and justifies continuing the surveillance mandated by the pope. This verdict, Vidal concludes, will be shared by others who write about the threat of Modernism in other places: in part because they share his conviction that there were priests who met the papal condemnations with a respectful silence while preserving hopes that reform, though delayed, must inevitably triumph, given the irresistible force of modernity; in part because the very definition of Modernism will expand to encompass forms of "Semi-Modernism" that go beyond its doctrinal expressions, and partisans who are termed "Modernizers" rather than Modernists as such.

Around the time that Vidal was surveying the scene in Italy, Paul Tailliez was casting a wider net in *La critique du libéralisme*, devoting articles successively to Germany, Austria, and England, before proceeding to Italy.¹⁵ His coverage of Italy attended especially to the *Programma dei modernisti*, connecting that "act of defiance" to a self-styled "international scientifico-religious society," which also founded the short-lived *Nova et vetera*. Its members expressed their intention to remain within the Church while striving to enlighten the public with Modernist propaganda. The final article in the series made it clear that the threat was not confined to unrepentant Modernists but encompassed various types of "Modernizers." At the end of his final installment, Tailliez includes an extract from an address given on the sacerdotal jubilee of Pius X by Dom Alessandro Cavallanti, known for his anti-Modernist writings.¹⁶ Cavallanti found a precedent for Modernism in Arianism, Pelagianism, and Jansenism, all of which disappeared under the forceful condemnations of their errors but left as their legacies a semi-Arianism, semi-Pelagianism, and a semi-Jansenism. Modernism, "unmasked and mortally struck, left behind it other errors that, like seeds, scatter among the masses and ruin or menace a number of good Catholics."¹⁷ If the orator could find semi-Modernism less hideous

¹⁵ Paul Tailliez, "Le Modernisme à l'étranger: I. En Allemagne," *La critique du libéralisme* 1 (October 1908–April 1909) 107–15; "II En Autriche" 140–46; "III En Angleterre" 236–45; "IV En Italie" 330–37; "V En Italie" 417–23. In the first of these articles Tailliez finds evidence of Modernist persistence in l'Affaire Schell, l'Affaire Ehrhard, and l'Affaire Schnitzer. Austria provided less fertile ground, yielding only l'Affaire Wahrmond. The third article showcased l'Affaire Tyrrell and quoted a statement of an English Modernist reported in the *Journal de Genève*: "We shall remain in the Church, but in order to destroy the papacy" (245).

¹⁶ Tailliez favorably notes Cavallanti's three works, *Modernismo e modernisti*, *Milano centro di modernismo?* and *I vicoli del modernismo in Italia*.

¹⁷ Tailliez, "V. En Italie" 422.

than its progenitor, Modernism, it was nonetheless more insidious. The more so “because the Modernizers readily say that the encyclical *Pascendi* does not touch them, that they are neither immanentists, nor agnostics, not fideists or symbolists, or evolutionists—as if the encyclical *Pascendi* did not also speak of criticism, sociology, autonomism, etc.—and that consequently they alone are true Catholics, modern without Modernism.”¹⁸ What they do represent is accommodation, equivocation, conciliation, capitulation, a trafficking with adversaries of the Church.¹⁹ In doing so they “render a superb service to liberalism as well as to Masonry, by the confusion they sow in the Catholic camp.”²⁰

The connection of “doctrinal Modernism” to other forms of it, especially social and political, was pursued in France by other writers in *La critique du libéralisme* along with like-minded polemicists who shared its outlook. Two in particular, Emmanuel Barbier and Julien Fontaine, were instrumental in calling attention to the dangers represented by Christian Democracy as a form of social or “sociological” Modernism that issued forth from the doctrinal synthesis condemned by the papacy. Both writers, in the period prior to *Pascendi*, had authored a series of works denouncing the initiatives of reformist Catholics. Fontaine had decried the corrosive effects of Protestant and Kantian thought on the French clergy; see his *Les infiltrations protestantes et le clergé français* (1901); *Les infiltrations kantiennes et protestantes et le clergé français* (1902); *Les infiltrations protestantes et l'exégèse du Nouveau Testament* (1905); *La théologie du Nouveau Testament et l'évolution des dogmes* (1906); *Le Modernisme sociologique* (1909); and *Le Modernisme social* (1911). Barbier's attacks on Catholics who sought to come to terms with democracy were earlier and more overtly expressed in *Les idées du Sillon: Étude critique* (1905); *Les erreurs du “Sillon”: Histoire documentaire* (1906); *Cas de conscience: Les catholiques français et la République* (1906); and *La décadence du “Sillon”: histoire documentaire* (1908). In contrast to the very negative image of Leo XIII that pervades the pages of Barbier's *Le progrès du libéralisme catholique en France sous*

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ See the characterization of semi-Modernism in *Unità cattolica* (November 1, 1908) and extracted in *La critique du libéralisme* the following month: the term designated a “state of mind” found even among the clergy who, “while rejecting doctrinal or reforming Modernism in its full and naked form,” openly or covertly persist in ceding “the principles and rights of Catholicism in the interest of this total reconciliation of the Church and the century”—philosophically, socially, and religiously. The inspiration is identical with that of liberalism; only Modernism expresses it more boldly and systematically. See “Le semi-modernisme,” *La critique du libéralisme* 1 (October 15, 1908–April 1, 1909) 167–68, at 167.

²⁰ Tailliez, “V. En Italie” 422.

le pape Léon XIII, 2 vols. (1907), Pius X is extolled in *La critique du libéralisme*, the review Barbier founded in 1908.²¹

The condemnation of Modernism put a potent weapon in the hands of those who were opposed to any compromise between Catholicism and Republicanism. At the end of 1907 Barbier's *Les démocrates chrétiens et le modernisme* appeared, denouncing Christian Democrats for their complicity with Modernism. The latter was charged with being "the scientific systematization of liberalism" and leading "in actual fact to the Democratization of the Church." He identified this as the nexus between Modernism and the Christian Democrats and concluded that the condemnation of the one necessarily entailed the condemnation of the other.²² Here Barbier cites the sections of *Pascendi* on the Church (no. 23), the Church's magisterium (no. 25), and the Modernist as reformer (no. 38), which condemn Modernist demands that ecclesiastical authority adopt a more democratic form, one that respects the freedom of consciences and reflects the true nature of the Church, which, Modernists hold, has its origin in the collectivity of consciences. In consequence, ecclesiastical governance must be reformed in both its external procedures and animating spirit, harmonizing it with civil forms, that is, decentralized and democratized. In short, both Modernists and Democrats arrive, though by different routes, at a common goal of democratizing the Church.²³ In making his case Barbier surveys publications and their directors: *La justice sociale* of Abbé Naudet and *La vie catholique* of Abbé Dabry; George Fonsegrive's *La quinzaine* and *Demain*, associated with Paul Bureau and Marcel Rifaux. *Le Sillon* and Marc Sangnier are covered last and stigmatized as "Modernisme avant la lettre." While *Demain* and *Quinzaine* would not long survive, the persistence of the other publications and the continued initiatives of their directors would continue to draw the attention of Barbier and his collaborators in the pages of *La critique du libéralisme*.

Tailliez followed up his survey of Modernism with an article on Mgr. Théodore Delmont's *Modernisme et modernistes, en Italie, en Allemagne*,

²¹ In Rome Barbier and his review had the support of Monsignor Umberto Benigni, an ardent antimodernist, and Louis Billot. On Barbier see Gerald O'Brien, "Integralism: An Historico-Critical Study of This Phenomenon in France as Seen in the Writings of Emmanuel Barbier (1851–1925)" (STD diss., Woodstock College, Md., 1963). Chapter 3 of this dissertation formed the substance of O'Brien's article, "Anti-Modernism: The Integralist Campaign," *Continuum* 3 (1965) 187–200; chapter 4 was published by Woodstock College in 1963 as an excerpt under the dissertation title.

²² Emmanuel Barbier, *Les démocrates chrétiens et le modernisme* (Paris: P. Lethielleux, 1907) 19.

²³ *Ibid.* 21–22.

en Angleterre et en France (1909).²⁴ He took the occasion to note how the extensive documentation provided in the book verified not only the sources of Modernist errors as set forth in *Pascendi* but also their application to the Modernism of the Christian Democrats. In making that application, works such as *Les démocrates chrétiens* had paved the way. In this connection Tailliez points to a figure like Abbé Jules Lemire²⁵ who, though not a philosopher, theologian, historian, or apologist, would qualify as a Modernizer, if not an actual Modernist. Lemire represented the ideals of Christian democracy in the Chamber of Deputies, to which he had been elected in 1893, during Leo XIII's *ralliement*. The positions Lemire took exposed him to the charge of seeking to introduce reforms into the internal organization of the Church, or in its relation to specific legislation of the state, to the detriment of "the rights of the sacred hierarchy" and "the essential rules of ecclesiastical discipline," and even at times "in defiance of the wishes expressed by the very Head of the Church."²⁶ In effect, Lemire serves as an example of a proponent of "political Modernism."²⁷

From a somewhat different perspective and applying a different label, Jules Fontaine also expanded the range of the Modernist heresy in the aforementioned *Le Modernisme sociologique*. In the introduction Fontaine stated: "It is evident that an internal battle wages at the very center of Catholicism, between a relatively small but still too large a number of priests and the hierarchy, and the battle is fought on a double field, the dogmatic field as such and the social field."²⁸ Modernism has assumed a double form: doctrinal and sociological. The sociological form differs from the doctrinal form that engendered it, in that its partisans do not always grasp the principles that underlie the positions they advocate, nor have the consequences of those positions become fully manifest. A major portion of

²⁴ Théodore Delmont, *Modernisme et modernistes, en Italie, en Allemagne, en Angleterre, et en France* (Paris: Lethielleux, 1909). Under the pseudonym J. Dalbin, Delmont had earlier published *Les erreurs des démocrates de la "Justice sociale"* (Paris: Vic & Amat, 1906). The errors in question were dogmatic and moral, exegetical and biblical, social, historical, and political.

²⁵ On Lemire see Jean-Marie Mayeur, *Un prêtre démocrate: Abbé Lemire 1853–1928* (Tournai: Casterman, 1968); and Jean Pascal, *Les ecclésiastiques parlementaires français 1848–1977* (Pointoise: Edijac, 1988) 220–50.

²⁶ Paul Tailliez, "Modernisme et modernistes," *La critique du libéralisme* 2 (April–October 1909) 538–42, at 541.

²⁷ "It is not without reason . . . that the Encyclical *Pascendi* denounced the democratic error as the real inspiration of a political Modernism. The Christian Democratic Party tries by all manner of arguments to exonerate itself of it [Modernism] and persists in denying even the most certain facts" (Emmanuel Barbier, "L'Action sociale catholique I: Les enseignements sociaux de S.S. Pie XI," *La critique du libéralisme* 2 (April – October 1909) 286–99, at 287–88).

²⁸ Jules Fontaine, *Le Modernisme sociologique* (Paris: Lethielleux, 1909) xxxii.

the book is given over to demonstrating two of the destructive consequences that follow from this latest phase of Modernism: the dechristianization of society and social disorganization. As encapsulated by Fontaine:

In the name of Christian fraternity, [sociological Modernism] professes an egalitarianism that is incompatible with any hierarchy and any idea of authority and subordination. It extols the autonomy of the human person, the equal worth of human agents, the equalization of rights . . . , an equalization that necessarily calls for equality in the possession and enjoyment of the goods of this world. Private property, diverse and unequal like the sources that produced it, ought henceforth to disappear.²⁹

The inroads of modern philosophy undermine the natural law, as doctrinal Modernism undermined the faith. The assault on the supernatural order is extended to the natural order, putting the Christian family at risk with the demise of private property and with it the social order.³⁰

Christian Democrats, Fontaine charges, make up the ranks of the sociological Modernists. Paul Naudet and Pierre Dabry, earlier targeted by Barbier, are again named here as prominent representatives. Fontaine also devotes attention to Henri Lorin, associated with the *Semaines sociales*, a sort of floating university that each summer brought together for a week diverse participants who followed courses on the Church's social doctrine and practice. Lorin had advocated cooperation with the social legislation of the Third Republic, arguing in favor of a unitary human destiny that refuses any separation between the business of eternal salvation and the business of this world. In doing so he drew upon themes present in Maurice Blondel's philosophy, connections that did not pass unnoticed by Fontaine.³¹ This laid Lorin open to the charge of confusing the natural and the supernatural orders (the same charge directed earlier against Blondel) as well as holding the tenets of sociological Modernism described by Fontaine in his introduction.³²

²⁹ Ibid. v (ellipsis original).

³⁰ Ibid. 435–36, 440–41.

³¹ Blondel defended Lorin and the *Semaines sociales* in a series of articles in the *Annales de philosophie chrétienne* that enmeshed him in controversy with critics of social Catholics. This phase of Blondel's work has received thorough treatment in Peter J. Bernardi, *Maurice Blondel, Social Catholicism, and Action Française: The Clash over the Church's Role in Society during the Modernist Era* (Washington: Catholic University of America, 2009).

³² Fontaine, *Modernisme sociologique* 428–54, makes the necessary connections. See Emmanuel Barbier, "L'Action sociale catholique," *La critique du libéralisme* 3 (October 1909–April 1910) 157–93, at 168–73. In the same volume of that journal, Théodore Delmont reviewed Fontaine's *Le Modernisme sociologique* and lauded the author's previous books as "precursors of the Encyclical *Pascendi*" (542). Although *Pascendi* itself did not mention the "Modernist as sociologist," "since Modernism is not only a doctrine, but a state of soul, a 'mentality' whose application extends to the entire Catholic life, there may be sociological Modernism, embracing the whole social

The tactic of portraying Modernist liberals and social Catholics as merely two variations of the same disease became standard. While largely ignored by German, Belgian, and Dutch bishops on the grounds that Modernism as described in *Pascendi* had few if any adherents among their clergy, it resonated strongly in France and Italy. In France this reaction was facilitated by the type of episcopal appointments made by Pius X. Those named to French dioceses were noteworthy for their reactionary politics.

To the sociopolitical form of Modernism could be added yet another type—"literary Modernism." Catholic writers who exalted a superficial religiosity and a vague idealism resting on individualist experience, who thereby perpetuated the fundamental errors of modern philosophy in popular form, who glorify a culture inimical to the Catholic Church—contribute, in their way, to the destructive work of Modernism. Kaspar Decurtins, for his denunciation of literary Modernism, received approbation from Pius X in 1910.³³

In the years immediately following its condemnation of Modernism the papacy was active in other ways. Antimodernists found confirmation of their ongoing campaigns in two encyclicals: *Communio rerum*, on the occasion of the eighth centenary of Saint Anselm of Aosta (April 21, 1909), and *Editae saepe*, marking the tercentenary of Saint Charles Borromeo (May 26, 1910).

Communio rerum drew parallels between the crises facing the church in Anselm's time and the present-day crisis.³⁴ While enemies external to the Church were clearly in view, internal enemies were the major preoccupation.

This poisonous disease (which is called *Modernism* because of its consuming passion for startling novelties) has not only been denounced on several occasions but also has been unmasked by its disciples' extravagances. It is still, however, a serious danger to Christian society. It has steadily crept into the very warp and woof of modern society, which has cut itself off from Christ and the Church. Like a cancerous growth it gnaws at the younger generation, which by its very nature lacks experience and caution.³⁵

Modernists profess errors corrosive of doctrine and discipline, seek to impart a new structure to the Church, all the while being "lavish in uttering

question with the diverse attitudes Catholics have taken toward it" (542–43, quoting here the *Corrispondenza Romana* [August 15, 1909]).

³³ Rivière, *Le Modernisme dans l'Église* 511.

³⁴ Barbier saw the catalog of outrages directed at the Church as "obviously stemming from its situation in France" (Emmanuel Barbier, "Les directions pontificales de Pie X," *La critique du libéralisme* 3 [October 1909–April 1910] 49–108, at 55).

³⁵ *Communio rerum* (no. 16), in *All Things in Christ* 140, emphasis original.

promises of submission whenever possible whenever they can hide behind them and gain recognition and protection through them.”³⁶ Scholasticism remains important for refuting error (here again Anselm is exemplary) while continuing vigilance is necessary to protect the young and, by implication, ferret out the dissemblers.

Editae saepe also sees Charles Borromeo “in the midst of trials very similar to those We are experiencing today.”³⁷ The memory of Borromeo’s work during the Counter Reformation provides an occasion to contrast the traits of a true reformer with those of a false one. Modern reformers surpass the excesses of the false reformers of former days; hence it is all the more necessary to “oppose these erroneous opinions now deceitfully being scattered abroad, which, when taken all together, are called *Modernism*.”³⁸

Beyond these reiterated warnings against the continuing threat of Modernism, polemicists such as Barbier and Fontaine could find more specific legitimation of their efforts in the condemnation of the Sillon in August 1910, immediately before the appearance of *Sacrorum antistitum*. Barbier could take particular satisfaction, as he could undoubtedly recognize use of his extensive writings critical of the Sillon in the pages of “Notre charge apostolique.”³⁹

Although for a time the Sillon and its founder Marc Sangnier enjoyed episcopal and papal favor, in the wake of the separation of church and state in France in 1905 and the condemnation of Modernism in 1907 its fortunes changed.⁴⁰ The encyclical’s censure of those who would speak of the “democratization” of the Church was directed at the Sillon, which had

³⁶ Ibid. no. 53, in *All Things in Christ* 153.

³⁷ *Editae saepe* no. 4, in *All Things in Christ* 159.

³⁸ Ibid. nos. 29–35, 21, in *All Things in Christ* 168–70, 165. Shortly after the encyclical’s appearance, Herbert Thurston commented on its motivation: “Pius X . . . was mainly preoccupied with the doings of the enemies of the Church in our own day, and . . . his strictures upon the leaders of the revolt against Papal authority in the sixteenth century were altogether subordinate to his purpose of pointing out the fallacy of anti-clerical and Modernist schemes of reform. If the work of restoring all things in Christ is to be successfully carried through, it must be, he urges, on the lines indicated by the example of St. Charles, not by unfurling the standard of rebellion” (“St. Charles Borromeo and the Recent Encyclical,” *Month* 116 [1910] 395).

³⁹ “Marc Sangnier en 1910: La lettre ‘Notre charge apostolique’ et ses suites,” *Actes de la journée d’études du vendredi 29 septembre* (Paris: Institut Marc Sangnier, 2000).

⁴⁰ On the Sillon and Sangnier see Alec Vidler, *A Variety of Catholic Modernists* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University, 1970) chap. 8. More recent studies of Sangnier and his movement include Denis Lefèvre, *Marc Sangnier: L’aventure du catholicisme social* (Paris: MamE, 2008); and Jean-Jacques Greteau, *Marc Sangnier: Le semeur d’espérances* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2009).

frequently used the expression. Moreover, the Sillon itself became oriented toward political and thus laic action. The French episcopacy increasingly voiced reservations about the Sillon's attitude toward ecclesiastical authority. Some bishops, such as Eudoxe Irénée Mignot, continued to support Sangnier and his movement, but the tide was flowing the other way.⁴¹ This fact became increasingly clear in Rome as well. On August 25 the pope issued a letter, "Our Apostolic Mandate," on the Sillon. The letter situated the doctrines of the Sillon in relation to those of the 18th-century philosophers, the Revolution, and liberalism, already condemned many times over. The movement had pursued a direction that had disappointed earlier hopes. Lacking firm grounding in historical science, sound philosophy, and a robust theology, its founders were not immune to liberal and Protestant infiltrations. In articulating a doctrine of human dignity, of liberty, justice, and fraternity, the Sillon's leaders have put themselves forward as professors of social, civic, and religious morality—and thereby transgressed on a domain that properly belongs to the Church. The letter went on to specify the nature of the errors it had targeted, and accused the Sillon of fashioning "blasphemous rapprochements between the Gospel and the Revolution."⁴² Sangnier submitted, and the other Sillonists followed his example. Mignot's comment in a letter to Alfred Loisy after the condemnation is instructive:

But is it only the Sillon that they have wanted to get at? It seems to me that they have aimed higher and have very skillfully grouped together errors that Marc Sangnier never professed. They have proceeded in the same way as with Modernism. . . . It is the triumph of *l'Action française*.⁴³

In commenting on Mignot's letter in his *Mémoires*, Loisy concurs with Mignot's judgment. In his view, in creating a Modernist system *Pascendi* had intended to strike at the entire scientific movement of the time, insofar as that posed a threat to the intellectual regime of Roman Catholicism. In analogous fashion, the letter suppressing the Sillon looked beyond its

⁴¹ In his study of the Sillon, Jean de Fabrègues summarizes the results of a survey conducted in October–November 1909 by journalist Albert Monniot among members of the French episcopate. "From the 84 French archbishops or bishops surveyed, 50 responded, of which 40 condemned or censured the Sillon. A mere dozen came to its defense: they were hardly listened to at Rome at this point, either because, like the archbishop of Rouen, Mgr Fuzet, they had taken a personal line tending toward an acceptance of the Separation, or because, like the archbishop of Albi, Mgr Mignot, or the bishop of Nice, Mgr Chapon, they were viewed as having for too long supported priests who had been condemned for Modernism or even left the Church" (Jean de Fabrègues, *Le Sillon de Marc Sangnier: Un tournant majeur du mouvement catholique* [Paris: Perrin, 1964] 211).

⁴² Quoted in *ibid.* 213–20.

⁴³ Quoted in Alfred Loisy, *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire religieuse de notre temps*, 3 vols. (Paris: Émile Nourry, 1930–1931) 3:197–98. See Hugues Petit, *L'Église, le Sillon, et l'Action Française* (Paris: Nouvelles Éditions Latines, 1998).

ostensible target to engage the broader efforts of Christian Democracy, Christian socialism, and of socialism as such.⁴⁴

From the foregoing survey it is apparent that *Pascendi* had not laid the specter of Modernism to rest. True, church authorities had exposed several of the worst offenders against doctrinal orthodoxy who had been dealt with by incurring various forms of ecclesiastical sanction. *Pascendi* had roused others to protest their innocence of any taint of Modernism, arguing that positions they held and advocated were not in fact those targeted by either the syllabus or the encyclical. In their case it was a matter of exposing the error in such claims and where their deviations from orthodoxy in fact lay. The critical responses of men like Barbier and Fontaine to Christian Democracy exemplify this sort of exposure. New forms of the Modernist menace had also emerged, especially among a younger generation; they differed from the more doctrinal Modernists who had provoked the Modernist crisis by focusing rather on disciplinary issues, such as the obligatory celibacy of the clergy. Writers in the *Revue moderniste internationale* characterized this trend and could be refuted in their turn.⁴⁵ An ongoing concern running through anti-Modernist writings of the years immediately following *Pascendi* is the persistence of unrepentant Modernists who, though outwardly submissive, continued to hold the heretical positions censured under the label of Modernism and, worse, still worked to propagate them. How to rid the Church of this clerical fifth column?

THE ANTIMODERNIST OATH

*"The persistence of Modernism among several malcontents, the occult propaganda that they carry on in various milieus and in various countries, motivate the vigilance, the protective measures prescribed by the motu proprio of 1 September."*⁴⁶

This state of affairs makes more intelligible not only the oath against Modernism but also the other two portions of the *motu proprio* in which it is embedded. To reiterate, the initial part reproduced the social control

⁴⁴ Loisy, *Mémoires* 3:197.

⁴⁵ Note, e.g., this assessment: "Although the 'the modernist movement' had, especially at the very beginning, attracted to itself a number of the most distinguished Catholic scholars of their generation, it would be a mistake to credit all the modernists, or the movement generally, with the virtues of the few. . . . A reading of the short-lived *Revue moderniste internationale* (1910–1912) or of *Das Neue Jahrhundert* in its middle years will disabuse anyone of the notion that those mixed up in 'the modernist movement' were the Catholic jewels of their generation" (Thomas Michael Loomer, *Liberal Catholicism, Reform Catholicism, Modernism: A Contribution to a New Orientation to Modernist Research* [Mainz: Matthias Grünewald, 1979] 172–73).

⁴⁶ "Chronique de mouvement religieux" 423.

measures that formed the third section of *Pascendi*, adding some instructions regarding the religious and intellectual formation of aspirants to the clergy. In his revisionist book on the Modernist movement, Thomas Loome has argued that, while the doctrinal portion of *Pascendi* had then and since drawn the most attention, its final section has significance beyond a collection of control measures designed to contain erroneous doctrines and those who promulgate them. In effect, Loome would agree with Loisy's assessment that in condemning a Modernist system the encyclical was intended to engage something broader. But he would argue that Loisy did not go far enough; the target in view was "the liberal Catholic tradition." Against the relative neglect of the catalogue of disciplinary measures in the standard accounts of Modernism, he contends that "it was this attempt on Rome's part to assert its authority over the academic life of the entire Catholic world which, in the eyes of Rome itself, was at the very heart of the anti-modernist campaign."⁴⁷ While it was possible to attempt to escape the doctrinal censures in the encyclical by countering that they applied to others and not to oneself, in regions of the Church not one's own, the threat posed to Catholic intellectual life by *Pascendi*'s disciplinary measures could be much harder to escape. In his survey of Modernism by country, Tailliez drew attention to "l'Affaire Ehrhard," the reaction to an article published in the *Internationale Wochenschrift* by Albert Ehrhard, dean of the Strasbourg Faculty of Theology on the new situation of Catholic theology. Ehrhard stated that the dogmatic part of *Pascendi* offered no difficulty, although he did not think that the encyclical succeeded in identifying the most profound or most active causes of Modernism. The disciplinary part, however, was another matter:

As for the practical measures the Encyclical prescribes, if they are carried out, the day will inevitably come when the Catholic Faculties of Theology in German Universities will sink into the grave. . . . The grave-diggers are already at the door. . . . We are put in the impossible situation of refuting the assertion of our academic colleagues, namely, that the encyclical proscribes all critical historical teaching of Catholic theology. . . . Ecclesiastical superiors are going to find it necessary to find spies among the students to maintain surveillance over the professor who will thus be submitted to an intellectual tutelage.⁴⁸

Tailliez focused on the scandal that irreverence such as Ehrhard's toward the encyclical caused at the time. Loome finds in it additional confirmation of his view that "there is no better place to look for the real intentions behind Rome's anti-Modernist campaign than in the third and last section of the

⁴⁷ Loome, *Liberal Catholicism, Reform Catholicism, Modernism* 98.

⁴⁸ From the French translation in Tailliez, "Le Modernisme à l'étranger: I. En Allemagne" 113.

encyclical.”⁴⁹ If we follow this line of interpretation, then resistance to the oath, particularly in Germany, appears to be set in a larger context of resistance to control of Catholic intellectual life. In its reaffirmation of aspects of the teaching of the First Vatican Council and of *Pascendi*, the oath functions as part of a broader strategy.⁵⁰ In its reassertion of traditional positions, the oath was implicitly reasserting the principle of theological control over philosophy, history, and other disciplines, countering claims of a legitimate autonomy on their part. This control is but one facet of ecclesiastical claims for control over political and social involvement on the part of Catholics.

The oath obligated the taker to “firmly hold and accept each and every definition of the unerring teaching of the Church . . . but especially those points of doctrine which expressly combat the errors of our time.”⁵¹ The text goes on to require express commitment to several of those points, beginning with the affirmation of natural reason’s ability to prove God’s existence “from the visible works of the creation as a cause from its effects.” From natural revelation the oath proceeds to supernatural revelation, specifically to acceptance of “the external arguments of revelation . . . especially miracles and prophecies” as warrants for the “divine origin of the Christian religion,” which are of perennial value. In doing so, it is reaffirming the teachings of Vatican I. What is in view may be suggested by the position taken in *Il programma dei modernisti*, published (anonymously) in direct response to *Pascendi*:

For us it matters little to attain to God through the demonstrations of mediaeval metaphysics or through arguments from miracles and prophecies, which offend

⁴⁹ Loome, *Liberal Catholicism, Reform Catholicism, Modernism* 99.

⁵⁰ *Pascendi* had accused Modernists of conscious dissimulation in their adopting a strategy of presenting various facets of their work piecemeal, so that its true import might be less apparent and their conclusions might insinuate themselves among their readers. A natural extension of this was the imputation of a passive dissimulation of their actual positions even after the condemnation of Modernism. The oath would force feet to the fire.

⁵¹ A text of the oath in English can be found in Gabriel Daly, *Transcendence and Immanence: A Study in Catholic Modernism and Integralism* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1980) 235–36; and in *The Church Teaches: Documents of the Church in English Translation* (St. Louis: Herder, 1964) 36–39. All quotations here are from the complete text of *Sacrorum antistitum* published in the *American Catholic Quarterly Review* 35 (January–October 1910) 712–31, with the oath itself at 723–24. On Louis Billot as author of the oath and internal discussion regarding its interpretation, see Judith Schepers, “So viel und so rasch wie in der Modernisten-Verfolgung hat die Kurie lange nicht gearbeitet . . .”: Zur kurialen Interpretation des Antimodernisteneides,” in *“In wilder zügelloser Jagd nach Neuem”: 100 Jahre Modernismus und Antimodernismus in der katholischen Kirche, Römische Inquisition und Indexkongregation* 12, ed. Hubert Wolf and Judith Schepers (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2009) 337–67.

rather than impress the modern mind, and evade the control of experience. We recognize in ourselves other powers of divine knowledge; we find in ourselves that inferential sense, of which Newman speaks, by which we can be assured of the presence of higher and ineffably mysterious powers with which we are in direct contact.⁵²

Il programma's authors also directly responded to the definitions of Vatican I reiterated in the oath. They offer a revisionist reading of the role of reason in the light of modern psychology that allows more scope to the will and the emotions, in a way that gives more prominence to experience. The claim is that the council's Scholastic formulation is not so much rejected as reinterpreted in the light of modern thought. The external signs of revelation, *Il programma* argues, are not so much probative as evocative of religious experience. The human mind does not passively receive such external signs; adherence to revelation is fundamentally a result of internal experience.⁵³

The third affirmation required by the oath related to the Church as "proximately and directly founded by Christ Himself . . . while He dwelt amongst us, and that she was also built upon Peter . . . and upon his successors." Once again this is a reaffirmation of Vatican I. More proximately, the syllabus *Lamentabili* had proscribed the propositions that "it was far from the mind of Christ to found a Church as a society which would continue on earth for a long course of centuries. On the contrary, in the mind of Christ the kingdom of heaven together with the end of the world was about to come immediately" and that "Simon Peter never even suspected that Christ entrusted the primacy of the Church to him."⁵⁴ The chief culprit in this connection was Loisy, notoriously in his *L'Évangile et l'Église* (1902) and *Autour d'un petit livre* (1903). Through his overt opposition to the papal condemnation, however, Loisy had incurred excommunication and left the Church. The anonymous authors of *Il programma*, on the other hand, remained in the Church while retaining and defending proscribed positions, persisting in their conviction that they were able to justify them. Perpetuating Loisy's views, they openly defended the position that the Church

came into existence very gradually after the resurrection of Christ. Had it been instituted directly by Jesus upon earth, or quite suddenly after His resurrection, it would be impossible to explain the conduct of the apostles who remained for a long time attached to the synagogue. . . . It was Paul more than any other who helped to found the Catholic Church. . . . The Church which lay beyond the horizon of Christ's outlook, bounded by the Parousia, grew up naturally among His followers and

⁵² *The Programme of Modernism*, trans. George Tyrrell (New York: Putnam, 1908) 98. The principal author was Ernesto Buonaiuti; see David G. Schultenover, S.J., *George Tyrrell: In Search of Catholicism* (Shepherdstown, W.V.: Patmos, 1981) 446.

⁵³ *Ibid.* 107–10.

⁵⁴ *Lamentabili sane exitu*, propositions 52 and 55, in *All Things in Christ* 227.

quickly passed from the charismatic hierarchy of His first days, arranged according to personal graces and gifts of the Spirit, to the official and monarchic hierarchy arranged according to measures of jurisdiction and sacramental power.⁵⁵

The oath's fourth requirement was the repudiation of "the heretical notion of the evolution of dogmas" with its accompanying naturalization of Christian doctrine as "a creation of the human conscience." Loisy had openly advocated an evolutionary apologetic for Catholicism without, however, capitulating to a complete naturalism. Other writers had gone the distance, as, for example, the articles published by "Antoine Dupin" on the Trinity and "Guillaume Herzog" on the Virgin Mary—pseudonymous publications then attributed to Joseph Turmel, whose writings under his own name found their way onto the Index prior to the imposition of the oath. Several propositions of *Lamentabili* had addressed this area of Vatican concern.⁵⁶ The oath's need to require explicit repudiation of this aspect of Modernism no doubt stemmed from the important role of evolutionary progress that *Pascendi* found in the Modernist system. Persistent manifestations of an evolutionary naturalism by professed Catholics would have reinforced the felt need to include it in the oath.⁵⁷

Fifth, also in terms reminiscent of Vatican I, the oath stresses faith as an intellectual assent to truth "received from without by hearing," as opposed to "a blind religious sense making its way out of the hidden regions of the subliminal consciousness." Like the previous areas singled out in the oath, this was yet another foundational error that simply would not lay quietly to rest.⁵⁸

Following these initial points derived from Vatican I and singled out for their particular importance, the oath goes on to require submission and adherence with one's mind to "all the condemnations, declarations and

⁵⁵ *Programme of Modernism* 69, 81.

⁵⁶ "Truth is no more immutable than man himself, since it evolved with him, in him, and through him" (no. 58). "Christ did not teach a determined body of doctrine applicable to all times and to all men, but rather inaugurated a religious movement adapted or to be adapted to different times and places" (no. 59). "Christian doctrine was originally Judaic. Through successive evolutions it became first Pauline, then Johannine, finally Hellenic and universal" (no. 60). *All Things in Christ* 227–28.

⁵⁷ *Il programma* includes a long section tracing major developments of Christian dogma along lines censured by the Vatican (*Programme of Modernism* 78–93), concluding: "As we cannot refuse the results (ever more or less imperfect) of social evolution, so, too, the whole process of Christian development, wrought by the Christian consciousness upon the religious experience of the Gospel, strikes us as something legitimate in itself which we are not free to accept or refuse, since in refusing it we should dry up the deepest roots of our spiritual life" (91).

⁵⁸ Here once more *Il programma* is representative rather than exhaustive; see the section on science and faith (124–26).

directions contained in the encyclical letter ‘Pascendi’ and in the decree ‘Lamentabili,’ particularly regarding what is called the history of dogma.” Rejections follow of five additional errors derived from *Pascendi*: (1) a contradiction between faith and history; (2) the ability to affirm as a historian what one’s faith as a believer contradicts; (3) preference given to rationalist criticism over Catholic criticism; (4) an incompatibility between historical impartiality and belief in the supernatural; and (5) a naturalist or pantheist conception of sacred tradition, and denial of the immutability of the deposit of divine truth.

The oath concludes with a promise for complete and sincere adherence to what has been prescribed and proscribed in it, and a forswearing of the least departure from this content in teaching, whether in word or in writing.

The oath was to be required of all professors of philosophy and theology, plus additional categories of clerics, seven in all: clerics before receipt of major orders; confessors and preachers prior to their receiving faculties; parish priests and canons; curial officials at both the diocesan and Vatican levels; Lenten preachers; and religious superiors and professors before entering office.⁵⁹

THE IMMEDIATE AFTERMATH OF THE OATH

*“Explaining his refusal to take the antimodernist oath, one of Coenobium’s editors claimed that adherence to a religious truth could not be imposed externally. He added that if the Church has the right to obligate, the same does not follow in the case of the Roman Curia.”*⁶⁰

For some of the staunchest anti-Modernists, the reiteration of *Pascendi*’s disciplinary measures and the imposition of the oath still did not settle matters. They deplored the stance of those like the editor of *Coenobium*, who contended that the oath did not obligate, adducing as arguments its mixing of revealed dogma with merely human opinions, and highlighting the Galileo affair as an instance of the fallibility of the Holy Office and the oppression of consciences attending adherence to the oath. *La critique du libéralisme* deplored the “sacrilegious boldness” of ecclesiastics who would take the oath as a pure formality without in any way engaging their consciences or modifying their ideas. Cautioning against exaggerating the number of such hedges, the journal implicitly made the case for continuing vigilance.⁶¹

⁵⁹ *Sacrorum antistitum*, *American Catholic Quarterly Review* 35 (1910) 722.

⁶⁰ “Le serment antimoderniste,” *Nouvelle revue théologique* 43 (1911) 383–88, at 383, from the *Civiltà Cattolica*, February–March 1911.

⁶¹ “Le main de la carboneria moderniste,” *La critique du libéralisme* 5 (October 1910–April 1911) 201–3.

For Barbier, despite the positive signs of doctrinal Modernism's decline and virtual disappearance, in politico-religious questions, given their indirect relation to intellectual questions, evidence of Modernist ideas persisted. Moreover, if Modernism could be considered "vanquished," the "Modernist spirit" still manifested itself in the "democratic spirit with which the young generation is deeply imbued." Thus, "the evil has put down deep roots."⁶²

In 1913 Jean-Martial Besse's *Les religions laïques: Un romantisme religieux* appeared; its very long subtitle alludes to the ongoing preoccupations of anti-Modernists and how they regarded the fight against Modernism as continuing: *Quatre pontiffs laïque: Paul Desjardins, Paul Sabatier, Salomon et Théodore Reinach. Leur théologie et leur mystique. Origines des religions laïques: L'apport Juif. Infiltrations Protestantes,—Importations Américaines. Les Congrès des religions.—L'Union pour la Vérité. L'École des Hautes Études Sociales.—M. Durkheim en Sorbonne. Union des Libres-Penseurs et des Libres-Croyants. Le Modernisme.*⁶³ The two components of the main title, laic religions and religious Romanticism, point to two religious questions that had become prominent by the end of the 19th century. Laic religions, Besse contends, converged with attempts to establish a basis for morality in the form of a "civil religion" that would in turn secure a basis for French national unity beyond ideological and social divisions, without recourse to metaphysics. Religious Romanticism also looked for a unity, a concurrence of the faithful of all religions based on the premise that foundational to religion is *sentiment*, which can be broadly rendered "experience." Since religious life produces emotions that come to expression in symbols, belief systems are secondary. Therefore what unites religions is more fundamental than what divides them. One name for this type of religiosity is "ultra-Catholicism," but, Besse argues, its goal is to replace Catholicism. That Modernism is but one manifestation of a religiosity grounded in human experience is apparent. The various components named in the book's subtitle have coalesced to form religious Romanticism. Hence Modernism's defeat does not mean the end of the danger. "Religious Romanticism continues its push

⁶² Emmanuel Barbier, "La France sauvée du schisme et de l'hérésie par S. S. Pie X," *La critique du libéralisme* 5 (October 1910–April 1911) 241–56, 349–61, 405–34. Given the connections between the "Modernist spirit" and the "democratic spirit," Barbier considers Pius X's letter directed against the Sillon as having struck at the root of schism and heresy, constituting "a declaration of war" against the "democratic spirit" (350, 351).

⁶³ On Besse see the entry in the *Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques*, vol. 8, cols. 1201–5. Jean-Paul Besse's *Dom Besse: Un bénédictin monarchiste* (Versailles: Éditions de Paris, 2005) is hagiographical.

forward.”⁶⁴ It does so not by frontal assault, but by infiltration, above all through electoral success. The threat is in the political order. To counter the partisans of religious Romanticism, not only their ideas but also their methods, entails the rejection of democratic society.

Here Mignot’s comment about Action Française, quoted earlier, becomes germane. Besse was a strong supporter of Action Française and had worked to establish it among Catholics. His tactic was to make Modernism a political problem, one that can be regulated only by political action. And here Action Française becomes the indispensable ally in the containment of Modernism, doctrinal and social. The ongoing threat of a Modernist spirit, kept alive in religious Romanticism and given tangible form by proponents of a laic morality, intentionally served the nationalist cause of Charles Maurras.⁶⁵ Vigilance could not cease.

CONCLUSION

*“[The oath’s] historical importance lies in the fact that it was treated as a formulary of faith by the clerical Church at large and as a locus theologicus by teachers of dogmatic theology. It, more than any other document, kept alive the memory of modernism in the Catholic Church long after modernism had ceased to be seen as an actual threat.”*⁶⁶

In his history of Modernism, Rivière estimates that there were perhaps 40 abstentions throughout the Church. In a few cases permission was given to take the oath with some accommodations.⁶⁷ By and large, then, the requirement of swearing against Modernism aroused little opposition. Germany constituted an exception for reasons that Ehrhard had earlier brought forward in relation to the disciplinary section of *Pascendi*. The credibility of Catholics in the professoriate in the view of their Protestant colleagues became a neuralgic issue. The result was a papal dispensation

⁶⁴ Dom Besse, *Les religions laïques* (Paris: Nouvelle Librairie Nationale, 1913) 306.

⁶⁵ See Paul Airiau, “Jean-Martial Besse, un religieux au coeur de l’anti-modernisme,” *Catholicisme et monde moderne au XIXe et XXe siècles: Autour du “Modernisme,”* ed. François Chaubet (Dijon: Universitaires de Dijon, 2008) 79–90. On Action Française see Eugen Weber, *Action Française: Royalism and Reaction in Twentieth-Century France* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University, 1962). Catholic recruitment to Action Française became so successful that non-Catholic members were the exception rather than the rule. The delegitimation of Christian Democracy worked to the benefit of Action Française; it had a vested interest in bringing this about, notably in the case of the Sillon. See Oscar L. Arnal, *Ambivalent Alliance: The Catholic Church and the Action Française, 1899–1939* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh, 1985) chaps. 4 and 5.

⁶⁶ Daly, *Transcendence and Immanence* 235.

⁶⁷ Rivière, *Le Modernisme dans l’Église* 537–38.

from the oath for any professors who did not exercise ecclesial ministry.⁶⁸ For decades, then, where the requirements of *Sacrorum antistitum* were strictly adhered to, clerics would take the oath several times in the course of their clerical lives; seminary or university faculty would swear the oath annually. In 1967 the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith finally rescinded the oath against Modernism.

⁶⁸ See Thomas F. O'Meara, *Church and Culture: German Catholic Theology, 1860–1914* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame, 1991) 172–74. Rivière, *Le Modernisme dans l'Église* 536, notes that the majority of German universities made it a point of honor when taking on new faculty members to choose only candidates who had not taken the oath.